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THE MILLENNIUM:

AN

ESSAY

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TO THE GENERAL CONVENTION

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ESSAY.

THE CONVENTION have assigned to me, as a theme for this essay, "The modern theory of Millenarianism." I do not understand them to expect a discussion of this subject, by way of defence, or apology, which would require a volume: but a statement, which may be brought within the limits proper to one of the many exercises of this occasion.

I honor the courtesy and liberality of my brethren. It is due to them, and to myself, not to decline their generous appointment. I will endeavor not to interfere with their other engagements, nor obtrude greatly upon their patience, nor make severe demands upon their charity.

I am reminded, that when Paul preached to the Athenians concerning Jesus and the Resurrection, he was encountered by certain philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoics. "And they took him, and brought him to Areopagus, saying, May we know what this doctrine whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean."

There is no resemblance between the parties brought together, then and now, in respect to character, or position. But the subject of inquiry and discourse is the same; namely, Jesus and the Resurrection. The resurrection was the prophetic evidence of the Messiahship of Christ, in connection with his first appearing. It is

also the prophetic evidence of the same office, but more exalted, in connexion with his second appearing. But, in the one case, it was his personal resurrection. In the other, it is the resurrection of his disciples; for, when he comes again, he will bring his saints with him. The resurrection of the saints is the prophetic proof of the Messianic kingdom consummated and manifested in a state of millennial glory, as the personal resurrection of Christ was the prophetic proof the same kingdom set up spiritually in believing hearts. The resurrection, in these different respects, is a matter of prophetic theology equally in the Jewish age, and the present Christian age; and it is the pivot on which the evidence of two successive ages or dispensations of Christianity, is made to turn. In the Jewish age it had been lost sight of, under the rubbish of rabbinical traditions, and philosophical speculations. When it occurred, historically, it was not believed at Jerusalem; and it seemed incredible at Athens. For similar reasons, it is equally lost sight of in the present Christian age. Its historical occurrence, in the present state of opinion on the subject, would be likely to produce even a more astounding sensation among the wise men of our times, than Christ's personal resurrection created among the doctors in the temple, and the philosophers in the Areopagus. Whoever attempts now to bring it out to view, beforehand, from the Scripture, in its prophetical relations, seems to the generality, to propound as great a novelty as Paul when he preached to the men of Athens. Society has now a different philosophy, as it had then; and probably nothing will, very extensively, dissipate its illusions, but "The Sign of the Son of man," and 'the opening of the graves.'

But not less, on that account, was the reality then; and not less, on the same account, will it be again. The

prophecy which was fulfilled, literally, two thousand years ago, is not more literally or significantly expressed in Scripture, than that which remains to be fulfilled, and for whose fulfilment the Christians are emphatically taught to be always looking. The doctrine of the resurrection, at Christ's second appearing, to introduce a millennial age of glory, is not a new and strange thing invented, but an old thing revived. It was preached to Abraham, when he received Isaac, in a figure, from the dead. It stands in all Scripture, and in the early formulas and traditions of the Christian church. It has been strange, at any time, only as men, for natural, philosophic reasons, or without reason, and without thought, have, in different periods, preferred not to contemplate this supernatural evidence of the Messianic reign; — first, the reign of grace, in the church militant; and, secondly, the reign of glory in the church triumphant.

Accordingly, I premise, that Millenarianism, of which Jesus and the Resurrection are the central figure, is not what the phraseology in which The Convention describe my subject, indicates, — a theory, but a doctrine. It is not more a theory than the Trinity, or the incarnation of Christ, or his atonement, or regeneration, or any other supernatural and distinctive element of the Revelations; but is itself a doctrine. That is, it is a formal and authoritative declaration of God concerning his way of governing the world by Jesus Christ. It is infinitely important, on that account; not as a matter of curiosity, but of faith, in distinction from the theories and speculations by which so many of the churches, and society in general, in our modern period, have been turned away, in this respect, from the simplicity of Scripture.

I know no theory of Millenarianism, properly so called; and I know no modern, in distinction from an-

çient Millenarianism. This, like other doctrines of Scripture, for a long time held by the primitive Christians, was corrupted, at length, by rationalistic and fanciful interpreters, led by Origen and other speculative theologians of the schools. Through the middle ages it was mostly covered up by scholastic traditions, allegorical commentaries, and the errors of Romanism in general. Occasionally, excited men, who caught, amidst the surrounding darkness, some glimpses of the primitive truth, attempted to revive it. But they could not reproduce it in its simplicity. The age was too dark. Providence was not ready for them. They brought out only obscure resemblances of it, mere caricatures, which disgusted all considerate persons, and served only to perpetuate the popular delusions. These extravagancies are reported in all the histories down to the Reformation.

The same has been true, to a great extent, of the latter half of the protestant period. The reformers, in general, returned, in this respect, as in others, to the primitive belief. Some of their ablest writers gave it their unequivocal testimony and support. But they were pressed by subjects of more immediate concernment to church and state, and could not, conveniently, elaborate this, which, as they foresaw and testified, would belong more intimately to a future, and, as some affirmed, our present period. It was suffered to fall off again, for the most part, into the hands of the speculative and curious, who have used it rather as a theme for the exercise of a romantic ingenuity, or for giving currency and effect to popular delusions. Till of late, there has been but little scientific inquiry into those laws of prophetic interpretation, by which alone the meaning of Scripture, and the orthodoxy of the primitive age, in this respect, could be re-established. The consequence has been, a deluge of

extravagant and pernicious millennial literature, from Burnet and Whiston all round to Whitby, and his modern imitators, and the school of Miller, among the interpreters; and, among the revealers, from Swedenborg to Ann Lee, and the Latter-Day-Saints of Utah. The protestant conceits have as far exceeded the flights of mediæval novelists, as mental activity and freedom of inquiry have been greater since the Reformation.

But Millenarianism, to a careful and conscientious student, who affects no intuitional knowledge of the Divine counsels, and submits not to human authority in matters of faith, is perfectly distinguishable from these speculative curiosities. It is as susceptible of scientific interpretation from Scripture, in its order, as any of the truths that orthodox Christians have accepted since the days of the Apostles. It is no more exceptionable, on account of the misrepresentations and abuses of it by foolish men, than the Trinity, or atonement, or a future state in general. Like those it has its own unique, intelligible, and infinitely important character, and admits of being reduced, as satisfactorily, if not as easily, to Scriptural formulas. It belongs to the same system of revealed facts, which cannot be consistently and adequately understood without it. It is part and parcel of the regular orthodox theology which Christ and his Apostles taught, which was measurably revived by Luther, Calvin, and the Divines at Westminster, and subsists the same forever. The modern churches have lost sight of it, only because they have lost sight, and so far as they have lost sight of that same old theology, and have admitted, consciously or inadvertently, Gnostic, Pelagian, and other heretical philosophies, into their religious creeds. If we could restore the old theology, in general, from these admixtures of speculation, and ‘ opposi-

tions of false science,' Millenarianism would necessarily be restored with it; for it is an integral and necessary part of it. There could not be a revival of the primitive theology without it. It is as really a part of the primitive faith, as the head, or hands, or feet, are parts of a man; or as a governor is part of the State; so that, without it, the man is not a man, but a *lusus naturæ;* and the State is not a State, but a jumble of discordant factions. My good brethren must pardon me for saying this; for I think it susceptible of demonstration. And it is as consequential as it is true; and therefore ought to be said. I pray them to pardon me: it is they who are following after 'modern theories,' and not the Millenarians. I say it in charity, for I have been as they are; and I would to God that they were, in this respect, as I am, 'except the bonds' which all men necessarily suffer who feel themselves obliged to conflict with inveterate prejudices of society.

But, however; I am to show what Millenarianism is: not what it is not; – not any of the caricatures which have been hung up in some of the theological reviews, and other periodicals, and in some sermons, and in Mr. Brown's famous book, by men who thought before they studied, and wrote before they thought. I do not discuss them. They have been handled hardly enough already, by one of our own writers, whose hand is *very* hard, and who wears no gloves.* I am to show simply what Millenarianism is. And the question 'what it is,' should be asked, only, as the Convention have asked it, of a Millenarian; —just as if one would know the doctrine of the Trinity, he should not consult Dr. Channing or Dr. Ware, but Professors Woods and Stuart; or election, not John Wesley, but John Calvin; not Martin

* Theological and Literary Journal.

Ruter, but President Brown, of Dartmouth College, or Walter Harris, of Dunbarton, or Abraham Burnham, of Pembroke ; or New England theology ; he should go to the fathers of it, and not their modern commentators. I am not to show what Millenarians believe, in common with other orthodox Christians ; nor what some Millenarians believe, in distinction from other Millenarians, concerning matters not essential to Millenarianism itself. Millenarians differ, just like anti-millenarians, on many subjects which are merely incidental to their respective views of the Millennium. About these incidental differences one would, reasonably, no more inquire, than, if he would know a specified object to be a man, whether he were of this or that height, or weight, or color; or a house, whether it were built of wood, or stone ; or a tree, whether its bark were rough, or smooth; or its fruit were sweet, or sour. These accidents are not material. So it concerns me not to show what is the cut of a Millenarian's coat, but what is the man under it; nor what the genius and spirit of Millenarianism itself, or its peculiar excellency and beauty, or its encouragement to Christian duty, or the hopes with which it gladdens the Christian heart ; nor what exceptions ill disposed, or unintelligent, or partial critics may choose to take against it ; but what it is in fact ; and whether, as a fact, it is written in the word of God, or not. It is unworthy, on the one side, or the other, of any question that involves the integrity of the Divine word, and the glory of Christ's kingdom, to set up, or cast down, a mere man of straw. Our concern is not with fictions, but realities ; not with a caricature, but the thing itself.

The dictionaries inform us that a Millenarian is one who expects the millennium. But the dictionaries make

poor distinctions in matters of higher science ; and they mark imperfectly its occasional obscurations and developements. They help us not on this subject ; for, Millenarians and anti-millenarians expect, equally, the millennium. At least, this is true, in general, except of those "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already ; and overthrow the faith of some." In this respect, orthodox Christians are not distinguished. Nor are Millenarians known by any peculiarity of views, in regard to the time of the millennium. They do not precisely define the time ; for they hold that 'the Father only knoweth the day and the hour when the Son of man cometh.' They leave such definition to more lively and curious minds, except in a general consideration of the difficult questions of chronology, and the more difficult 'signs of the times.' The best accredited anti-millenarians have expected the millennium about 1866. One of the most remarkable of that class lately urged upon his brethren more strenuous exertions in the propagation of the gospel, because, according to his theology, the millennium presupposes a conversion of the world, and because 'the prophetic periods are almost run out ;' as if but fifteen or twenty years then remained for this great work to be accomplished. One would think, indeed, such an appeal not very encouraging to Christian effort, in view of any data of history or experience : but that is no concern of a Millenarian ; and it is not the least of the practical difficulties of the popular belief, which the Millenarians avoid. They define not the time; or, if any do, they look not for the conversion of the world till the righteous dead are raised, to preside over and enjoy the renovated scene, at the second coming of their Lord. Nor have they peculiar views about the duration of the millennium ; some supposing, with the oth-

er side, that it will be a literal period of a thousand years ; others, a symbolic period of three hundred and sixty thousand ; and others still, a period of indefinitely long continuance. Both parties agree that it will be an era of unexampled religious prosperity; that the Gospel will be universally preached, and, by extraordinary communications of the Holy Spirit, bring the nations of the earth into a state of righteousness and peace. There is no difference, in this respect, except that Millenarians entertain by far the most exalted views of the dignity, blessedness and glory of that restored scene, inasmuch as the glorified Christ, with his glorified saints, will preside over it, and all things will be made new. Both parties pray for it, accordingly, with one voice, and, so far as consistent with their different degrees of intellectual elevation, in this respect, with one heart. They join together in the Lord's prayer, as if with the same mind, while they supplicate — " Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." A stranger to their respective peculiarities of interpretation, while he observed, in this respect, the fervor of their common devotions, would not imagine that they were not as harmonious concerning the matter, as the form and seeming spirit of their requests.

But here they differ ; namely, in the matter of their prayer; and in spirit, so far as that is naturally affected by their respective views of the kingdom, the power and the glory of God, which are to be set up and manifested on the earth. Here the peculiar and distinctive elements of the millenarian theology open upon us. The Millenarian interprets the Lord's prayer, and other related passages of the Bible, according to the natural meaning of the language. He believes, consequently, in a peculiar government of God *yet to come* upon this earth ; — a

kingdom which, during the whole of the present age or dispensation of Christianity, while this form of supplication is enjoined upon the Christians, is *future* to it; something which *is to be*, manifestly and visibly, by special and miraculous interpositions of Christ, in glory and majesty, *after it*; – even as the present, and past dispensations of God were successively and separately introduced by miraculous manifestations, each one a sudden, distinct, supernatural, and glorious advance upon the preceding; rising up a new form, out of their respective broken up and demolished forms; — not a new religion, but a new exposition, presentment, and enforcement of God's everlasting plan of governing, teaching, redeeming and saving this fallen world, for his own glory, by Jesus Christ. The anti-millenarian interprets not according to the natural meaning of the language; but speculatively and figuratively, according to his own imaginings, because such interpretation is more congenial to his philosophical ideas of the kingdom of God. The meaning which he extracts conforms to his notions of right and fitness, and of what is *best* in general; and he concludes it to be the meaning which God intended in giving the Revelation. He believes, accordingly, that the kingdom of God is not to come, visibly and manifestly, but is only spiritual; that is, consisting in right affections of the heart; that it already is all that it ever will be, on the earth, except in degree. When he prays that it may come, he means only that it may be advanced, may come more extensively and powerfully in the hearts of men; that what now is may grow and increase, and spread itself, in connexion with the ordinary civilizing processes of society, till it fills the whole earth; all things in the constitution and course of nature, and in society, except what takes place in men's hearts, going on or con-

tinuing as they have been since the age of miracles, which he assumes to have ceased forever, or, at least, till the total and absolute destruction of the terrestrial system. That is the essential difference between them. What that difference affects, will be better understood as we go more into detail.

Or, in other words, the millenarian believes, with his brethren, and with at least as strong assurance, in a kingdom of Jesus Christ now, and from everlasting to everlasting; that is, that Christ is the creator, ruler and disposer of all the worlds; that he has a throne, peculiarly and distinctively, in the hearts of his disciples, ruling in them, and over them, and for them, during this whole probationary age of trial, difficulty and danger; delivering them, in the issue, from all their enemies, and bringing them to his everlasting glorious kingdom with exceeding joy; and that he exercises this natural and providential government, and this supernatural spiritual government, with reference to the more perfect manifestation of himself, by the church, in the ages to come. But, differently from his anti-millenarian brethren, he does not believe that this spiritual kingdom of Christ, in distinction from his general government of the world, will be universal during the present dispensation. He does not believe with them, in the conversion of mankind in general, and the gradual developement of this present into a perfect state, before the second appearing of Christ; but that that remarkable event will be pre-millennial. He looks for that blessed hope, not when the world is converted, and brought into a perfect state; but contrarily, when it has reached its lowest stage of apostasy and wickedness; 'when the heathen rage, and the people imagine vanities; when the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against

his anointed ;' and 'faith is hardly found upon the earth.' Then, in that period of anti-christian misrule, and over-spreading popular delusions, and general atheistic and pantheistic unbelief, he believes that Christ will be revealed, in glory and majesty, like lightning from heaven; that his feet will stand, in that day, upon the mount of Olives ; that he will, by miraculous judgments, as in old time, cast down all principalities and powers that have exalted themselves against him; 'speaking to them in his wrath, and vexing them in his sore displeasure; breaking them with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel;' that 'he will set his king upon his holy hill of Zion ;' and, thenceforward, having brought with him the righteous dead of the past ages, in the first resurrection, and purified the earth by fiery judgments, will establish a metropolitan government on the throne of David in Jerusalem, and reign, with his risen saints made kings and priests, over the renovated and re-peopled earth ; that, thenceforward, he will convert all the nations, by more remarkable effusions of the Holy Ghost ; that this glorious manifested kingdom will be a conpsicuous evidence to all worlds, for a thousand years, of his power and victory over the Devil and his angels ; and then be delivered up to the Father as an illustrious trophy of redeeming mercy ; that the rest of the dead will be raised, at the end of that judicial age ; the final discrimination will be made, and death and hell be cast into the lake of fire. Then, the work of the blessed eternities will go on, in ways and methods, of which the Scripture gives no account, and which are past all human comprehension. " Eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Or, still otherwise, the kingdom of God which is now, in distinction from his general government, and from that illustrious kingdom which is to come, is a kingdom of grace, into which his elect people, an εκκλησια, are gathered, out of all nations, during the absence of their great High Priest, as intercessor in heaven; that this εκκλησια constitutes "the kingdom," which "the nobleman" receives while he is in "the far country"; and which, up to the very close of his absence,—that is, to the term of the present dispensation of Christianity,—is not comprehensive of the universal world, or any considerable part of it, but is 'a little flock;' that, on his return, at his grand Παρουσια, the commencement of the great assize, he will set it up, and cause it to 'shine forth as the sun,' and, thenceforward, 'bring the glory and honor of the nations into it,' causing, by unexampled effusions of the Spirit, 'every knee to bow, and every tongue to swear' allegiance to Christ; when 'his glory shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.' In that millennial age, Christ 'shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied;' he shall reign in peace and righteousness, and 'there shall be none to hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain.' But, meanwhile, the elect church is, in no sense, and at no time, triumphant, but militant, in a state of many fightings and afflictions; prepared and qualified, by this severity of discipline, for the coming era of glorious manifestation. The leaven of grace, now diffused, in the time of preparation, pervades and assimilates the church, its members one to another, and all to God; but not the unbelieving world,—just as actual leaven does not assimilate sand, and convert it into bread, but meal only. The sand will be sand, and the meal will be meal; that is, the church will be the church, and the world will be the world, till 'the end of the age;' so, as in anoth-

er parable, the wheat and the tares will grow together till the present mixed and confused dispensation terminates, at the harvest, when, at that ordained end of the age, 'the wheat shall be gathered into the garner, and the chaff be burned in unquenchable fire'.

That is Millenarianism, as it was, and as it is. So the primitive church believed and taught. So Calvin, Pictet, and scores of men at Westminster; so Chillingworth and Butler substantially taught. So Howe, Edwards, and some of their successors almost saw, and were ravished by the sight, so far as they could see through the invading cataract of a false philosophy. But we, their children, have become blind. We have stumbled upon the dark mountains. Many of us have turned the plain and unsophisticated letter of Scripture into figure; its experimental facts into speculative fictions; its figures, by which it would illustrate the literal facts, and make them more impressive upon the world, into unmeaning symbols; its symbols, which proved the facts and figures by unanswerable analogies, into unmeaning figures; and fact, and figure, and symbol, all descriptive alike of Divine realities, into an unintelligible jargon. No two interpret them alike; and few care to interpret them at all. The confusions and uncertainties of the commentators have produced a general distrust of prophetical study. Let my brethren pardon me; for, in this thing I have sinned with them, and beyond them, and have need of forgiveness more than they.

But Millenarianism will be better apprehended, by considering it somewhat more variously and minutely in its theological connexions.

The Millenarian, according to his simple, and, as he believes, the only scientific method of interpretation, understands from Scripture, that the human race, subsist-

ing in Adam, as a federal head and representative, by God's inscrutable appointment, "sinned in him, and fell with him in the first transgression." On the authority of Scripture, confirmed, as it is, by history and experience, he holds that the penal consequences of the fall mysteriously passed over from Adam to all his posterity forever; and, equally, to all inferior and subordinate material natures, in their respective orders,–they being, evidently, integral and related parts of one comprehensive system. Consequently, the terrestrial universe, "The whole creation," is under the curse of God, 'groaning and travailing in pain together.' God has thus seen fit to exhibit to all the worlds the righteousness of his government. The creation of man, his fall and its consequences, were in the foreknowledge of God, and according to his eternal purpose, for the ulterior end of his own glory. But his highest glory consists in harmonizing all his righteous attributes, and their corresponding manifestation to the worlds; mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace embracing each other. Accordingly, also in God's eternal foreknowledge and decree, subsist the mediatorial work of Christ; a probationary state, instead of absolute and immediate destruction for the fallen world; corresponding means of grace; and means of temporary subsistence, amidst the thorns and briers of the accursed and disordered earth; the calling out and conversion of a peculiar people to himself, heirs of salvation, from all the nations and races of the doomed world; their preservation in a state of holiness, during the continuance of the disciplinary period; the redemption of their bodies from the grave, at its appointed close; the cotemporaneous Παλιγγενεσια of the broken up earth; the consequent liberty and adoption of the whole fallen scene; a millennial age of righteousness and

peace; the subsequent resurrection of wicked men; their casting down, with evil spirits, in everlasting punishment; and an eternity of glory. All this is accordingly revealed, and becomes effect in its appointed times. Thenceforward to the ransomed and recovered race, God takes occasion, by these infinitely mysterious providences, which are for our contemplation, and the trial of our submission and faith, to gain for himself, out of all the successive confusions and irregularities of the fallen world, an infinitely higher glory, as a moral governor, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

It is observable that this purpose was in Christ. This, and many similar phraseologies of Scripture, constitute a body of doctrine, of great account in the primitive and reformed churches, which is mostly lost sight of among our modern theories and speculations, and is rarely ever intimated in the modern pulpit; namely, the doctrine of the covenant. This covenant, the Scripture, in order to assist our crude and imperfect conceptions of such matters, sets forth to us in the light of an engagement formally subsisting, in eternity, between the Father and the Son, to the effect that the systems of worlds and creatures should be produced by the creative *fiat* of the Son; that, upon the entrance of sin into this particular world, 'a peculiar people,' an elect, should be saved out of it, by the Father, to his praise, through Jesus Christ; that Jesus Christ should become incarnate to make atonement for sin, whereby this elect people would obtain redemption and justification, through faith, consistently with the honor of moral government, unto eternal life; that the

Holy Ghost should instruct, awaken, renew, sanctify, preserve, comfort, assure, and bring home to glory the covenanted people ; and they should constitute an illustrious kingdom, for ever showing forth the praises of God. This covenant, existing in eternity, is revealed in time ; that is, during the ages of the Father's manifestations and dispensations to mankind till the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is contained in the Scriptures given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, according to which Divine record God proposes to carry on, as it is now historically evident he has accordingly carried on, thus far, his government of the world. The covenant, in a word, represents that Divine plan, agreeably to which God is to be seen, in all successive ages, as accomplishing his great end in creation, even the manifestation of his glory in moral government. It is intelligible, righteous, benevolent, merciful, infinitely beautiful and glorious, through which alone there could be any *a priori* assurance, or any hope, in the course of time, that any of our lost race would be saved.

Corresponding to this covenant, by which this illustrious kingdom of grace and glory is given to Jesus Christ, the Scripture describes subordinate promises and engagements between God and the ransomed church, through Adam, Abel, Enoch, and Noah, down to the patriarch Abraham, to whom remarkable promises are given. In the line of this distinguished servant of God, is constituted a great nation, in which the church of the first testament should be perpetuated, the Messiah should be produced for a light to the gentile nations, and for the gathering of a faithful church also among them, during a long period in which the Jews should be kept in abeyance for their sins. This great nation, restored, in the fulness of time, to their original, but temporarily alienated and down-

trodden inheritance, as the children of Shem, and of the adoption, and the covenants, should, thenceforth, maintain the worship of the true God, in their own land, and propagate the holy Gospel, to bless, according to the covenant with their believing representative progenitor, 'all the families of the earth.'

By these respective covenants and promises, the elect church of God, of all the ages and nations, is assured, beforehand and continually, of being preserved on the face of the earth, amidst the wickedness of mankind in general, till the purposes of God, in respect to all the different ages, nations and races of the earth, should be perfected; a full demonstration be made, on the one hand, of evil, and, on the other hand, of good; and, in the result of that awful antagonism, God should subvert the whole combined array of hostile forces, both of evil spirits and evil men, and recover possession, by Jesus Christ, of this revolted and alienated world. Accordingly, in fact, the righteous Noah and his family are saved from the flood which deluges all the other inhabitants of the earth; Lot is brought out of the burning Sodom; Abraham is distinguished from the dispersed at Babel, as the representative father of a nation privileged above all other peoples scattered from that scene of judgment, and, ultimately, of all the nations of the earth; 'a remnant is preserved, according to 'the election of grace,' during 'the times of the gentiles,' among 'the outcasts of Israel,' and 'the dispersed of Judah;' and the elect gentile church, under a better dispensation, has a new and more glorious promise of Christ, that he will not leave them comfortless during his age of intercession in heaven, but will send forth his Spirit to conduct them safely through their fiery trials. In the last and most perilous times of Christianity, when 'evil men and seducers shall

wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived,' scoffing at the promise of his second coming, and provoking then a general desolation of the earth by fire, as in old time by water, he appoints to save them from the ordained catastrophe, as he had saved his people in past ages, and then to set up a kingdom that shall not be moved forever. During a judicial and triumphant age of a thousand years, that immovable and everlasting kingdom shall be shared by the saints of the preceding ages, brought with him in the resurrection; and, in those 'times of restitution, will be fulfilled the things that God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began.' This testimony of the prophets reaches down only to the end of the millennium, when, upon this everlasting kingdom, formally delivered to the Father, the ages of glory will open; of which blessed period the prophets utter nothing but the certainty of its occurrence.

Such are the covenanted assurances of God. In beautiful and touching correspondence, the Scripture represents his merciful training and disciplining of his covenant people, and his interpositions in their behalf, through the successive ages of their probation. He comes down from heaven, manifesting himself, in condescension to their dulness and ignorance, their susceptibility to atheistic and idolatrous delusion, and in pity of their infirmities, by miraculous signs and tokens, as the personal God, Jehovah, the ruler of the worlds, in opposition to all the images, idols and false gods which the unregenerate and godless part of mankind ever exalts against him. He appears, visibly und ostensibly, by Jesus Christ, as the Messenger, the angel of the covenant, to Adam, to successive patriarchs, and favored representative saints, all along, during the early ages of the world; he talks with them; gives them rules, directions and promises;

delivers them by executing express judgments upon their enemies; till, at the flood, lest virtue should absolutely die out, he breaks up, supernaturally, the whole disordered system of affairs. At Babel, he interferes for the deliverance of his church, by scattering the guilty people, confounding their speech, dissolving their power, and preventing their guilty combinations. He appears to Lot and Abraham; subjects the latter to a peculiar trial, to qualify, and mark and set him forth as the representative of a great nation in which he would perpetuate his church; by which he would, at length, introduce salvation to the scattered gentile nations; and, in a later age, when he should restore it to its own land, and reinstate it in its covenant prerogatives, would then propagate the faith, amidst new signs and wonders from heaven, and bless all the families of the earth. He manifests himself to that chosen nation, in great power and glory in Egypt, at the Red Sea, in the pilgrimages of the desert, at Sinai, and onwards, in signal deliverances of the people; in judgments upon their enemies; and in their successive captivities and returns, after their settlement in the land of promise. At length, upon the hopeless apostasy of this backsliding people, and a corresponding moral darkness overspreading the whole world, then, in the highest stage of the ancient civilizations, but of universal wickedness, a more signal manifestation of God marks the setting up of a new economy. In like manner, under this more gracious dispensation, the work of gathering and disciplining the gentile church is carried on by the Holy Ghost, the great promise of the New Testament, during the absence of the great High Priest in heaven. Amidst the wide-spreading antichristian abominations of this remarkable era, the wicked world in general, like Israel, while Moses was in the mount

with God, relapsing into various forms of spiritual idolatry, the same Divine power sustains, comforts, delivers the persecuted and afflicted church, till the πληρωμα, the complementary number of the elect among the gentiles, is brought in 'out of every nation, and kingdom, and tongue, and people,' that, on their part, refuse and reject the Gospel, and resist the Spirit; – and a way is thus prepared for the vindication of God's absolute personality, and the perfection of his moral attributes. This remarkable series of trainings, disciplinings, judgments, destructions, restorations, finds its appointed end in the catastrophe of wicked nations; the casting down of evil spirits; the fulfilment of the blessed covenants in a universal regeneration of the earth and man; and the settlement of the times of refreshing from the Παρουσια of the Lord, whom the heavens must receive till that prophetic restitution shall ensue.

It is very observable, that these remarkable, but now almost forgotten covenants and promises, are made and ratified by God, upon a distinct foreknowledge of all the facts and events that should take place in the fallen world; and that these facts and events successively take place, literally and circumstantially, in time, place, form, manner and degree, and in natural order and relation, as foreknown and declared beforehand, by him who sees the end from the beginning. Altogether they verify the being, personality, and holy attributes of God, the righteousness of his government, and his claims to the universal reverence, confidence, and obedience of his creatures. The fall of man was perfectly evident, beforehand, to the mind of God. Upon the occurrence of that event, he manifests himself with the assurance that its *natural*; that is, its *stated* penal consequences, reaching down through all the ages, should be overruled to the higher

illustration of his glory as a moral governor, in the work of redemption by Jesus Christ, the ultimate dejection of evil spirits, and 'the perdition of ungodly men.' The transmitted plague of sin foreseen to become infectious and overspreading, during the antediluvian age, having reached its natural crisis in the time of Noah, and resulted in the almost total destruction of the race; again he is manifested in the deliverance of that righteous patriarch, and the subsequent sequestering of a peculiar nation to become a depositary of the true religion. The general apostasy of that favored people, — the subject of continual prophecy and warning from the time of Abraham, — having, in its season, provoked judicial vengeance, and resulted in the overthrow of the Jewish commonwealth, again God is manifested incarnate, and sends out the Gospel to the uncircumcised nations dispersed from Babel. In like manner the evangelization of the gentile nations; the ingathering of churches over the civilized world, and among barbarians; the anti-christian apostasy of the states and governments of the earth; the dying out of churches in one land, and their rising in another; the circuit of the Gospel from east to west, till it should be preached in all the world, for a witness to all the nations; the universal prevalence of unbelief and wickedness in the last days of this more glorious dispensation; the consequent general overturning that would ensue, at Christ's second coming; and his assumption of universal government; — all stand out as naturally related parts of a comprehensive scheme, challenging the scrutiny of the world, and requiring, upon the highest pains and penalties, its recognition of the moral providence of God. The whole series is unique, consistent, similar; — a series of degradations, destructions and new creations, by a supernatural power; and not, as represented by the

atheistical philosophies, a course of natural developement of the earth and man into a perfect state. But out of the fallen humanity, the kingdom which God sets up and preserves, through all the ages, is not of this world ; for the world passeth away. The leaven of grace pervades not the world, but the ransomed church, while the world hastens to its successive judgments. Successive ages of miraculous revelations and Divine interpositions, in preparation of the church for its destined state of glory, follow each other, in connexion with corresponding supernatural judgments upon guilty nations, till the last ordained scene of Christ's second appearing to execute more signal vengeance upon wicked men ; to create all things new ; and introduce the ages of ages of glory.

It is also worthy of more distinct notice, that the facts and events prophesied of, in fulfilment of the Divine covenant and promise, have now become, for the most part, veritable history. That is, these facts and events have successively taken place, literally and circumstantially, as foretold and recorded in the miraculous revelations, coincident with all secular history and tradition, and with various natural phenomena, for the instruction and warning of the world. There is, consequently, ground of unhesitating assurance, that the facts and events predicted in Scripture, as yet future, and known not to have taken place, will, in like manner, take place, in their appointed times, literally and circumstantially, as foretold. This history of God's moral providence is simple and intelligible as any history of his merely natural providence, having the advantage of inspired testimony with a supernatural authentication. The creation of the world and of man ; the fall ; the promise of Christ ; the calling and election of a church ; its preservation in a state of holiness and acceptance with God ; the wickedness of the unregenerate part of mankind increasing and extend-

ing till the desolation of the earth by the flood, – are history. The preservation of the righteous Noah and his family; the partitioning of the earth among the sons of Noah; the curse and stigma of the guilty Ham; the political and social blessing of Shem and Japhet; the corresponding different paths, localities and conditions of their several respective races upon the re-peopled earth; the confusion of speech at Babel, and the subsequent dispersion of the presumptuous and rebellious people; the call of Abraham; the separation of the Jewish nation, and the settlement of their theocratic government; their backslidings, captivities and returns; the universal wickedness of the surrounding nations; and their successive destructions, all according to the supernatural word of God, – are history. The decline of the Jews in knowledge and virtue; the ceasing of vision among them; their ultimate general apostasy; the miraculous overthrow of their economy and commonwealth; and their dispersion among all the gentile nations, – are history. The coming of Christ, and its attendant signs from heaven; the settlement of the Christian church; its incipient corruptions, through the antichristian power already beginning to work in the days of the Apostles; the rapid spread of heresy and false doctrine under the man of sin; the idolatrous union of church and state; the consequent secularization of Christianity through a long period of despotic rule; the subjugation of faith and knowledge; the reigns of terror; the persecutions of the saints; the era of credulity, submission, ignorance and idolatry, – are history. The partial discomfiture of the antichristian powers, and the revival of true religion, at the era of the Reformation; the rise of a new antichristian power in the reformed churches, as in the days of the Apostles; the corruptions of the reformed religion; the flood of rationalism and infidelity that has rolled over the lands

of Luther and Calvin, and of Christendom in general; the reactions of Romanism and despotism, and the remarkable agitations of the recent protestant period, all are history ; — the history of conflict between Christ and Antichrist for the possession of this lost world. In all this history we see nothing of developement and progress except of the mysterious plan of providence in preserving the elect, and permitting the wickedness of the world to unfold itself in new and more subtle forms and types of unbelief answerable to the prophetic accounts of the last and perilous times of the Christian age. So far is humanity, in its natural course and progress, from developing itself into a perfect state, according to the philosophic theories of the times, and the corresponding tendencies of socialistic and philanthropic reformers and agitators in general ; and so far is the world from approaching its converted state, agreeably to the speculative theologians who have shaped their views and measures to these philosophic theories ; it is historically and certainly evident that, hitherto, every tribe, nation and race of men upon the earth, a few righteous men alone excepted, have successively declined into greater wickedness; and that, at this present time, Christianity is spreading in the world, in no proportion to the increase of the wicked population of the globe, and the spread of atheistic, or pantheistic, or polytheistic unbelief. It is evident, and the fact is sometimes inconsiderately and inconsistently admitted by such speculative reasoners themselves, that the rapid developement of our present worldly civilization is more and more alienating society from God, and making it more difficult for his servants to preserve themselves in the simplicity of their faith. Whatever advantage Christianity gains, through its comparatively few and inconsiderable friends, and the expansion and diffusion of knowledge in general, as it does gain great absolute advantage,

and more fully asserts and vindicates the government of God, it gains no relative advantage, but the contrary. The spirit of the fallen world converts the same means of advancement and power into instruments of more refined and wide-spreading licentiousness and unbelief, so that goodness bears no proportion to wickedness, in view of any sound ethical or evangelical standards, in the most cultivated and christian nations; and these nations, because of their accumulated errors and vices, are, at this moment, reeling to and fro, and staggering like a drunken man. The Scripture is, so far, literally fulfilled.

Wherefore the Millenarian holds it to be conclusive, and certain as any other doctrine, or matter of faith can be; — and they are perfectly certain because standing on the sure word of God; — that, inasmuch as in all the past ages wickedness has increased in every nation, and under every successive dispensation of religion, and more offensively to God in proportion to the increased light and importance of each succeeding revelation, till he has seen fit to overturn and destroy the existing organization of things, by extraordinary natural visitations, and by supernatural deluges, and storms of fire and brimstone from heaven, and thus has made room for higher and more glorious dispensations, according to his everlasting covenant, so the fallen race will be likely to manifest still more its rebelliousness and guilt, as prophecy declares; and he will consequently do, as he has done in the past, so also in the future, as he expressly says he will do, in executing judgment, not upon particular nations only, but the aggregate and collective world, and setting up the promised universal reign of Christ. There is the strongest natural probability that God will carry on his government, in the future, as he has carried it on in the past ages, since no reason exists in the nature of God, or the nature of man, why it should be otherwise: and

when he says, distinctly and literally, as he does say in his word, that he will so carry it on, we are bound to believe him, – all the wishes, or imaginings, or speculative reasonings, of bad or good men, and all occasional different phenomena of nature or society to the contrary notwithstanding. We have no right to conclude or imagine, against the ordinary laws of language, the rules of logic, the analogies of history, and the general course and tendency of events, that his distinct and literal declarations may be subjected to a mythical interpretation; or that he will act, in his future government, contrarily to the methods which he has certainly observed in the past. When Christ affirms, distinctly and positively, as he does affirm, that he will come, manifestly and visibly, a second time, from heaven, upon the full ingathering of his elect among the gentile nations, and will then destroy the antichristian nations, judicially, as he destroyed the ancient pagan and Jewish nations, and will deluge the sinful and accursed earth with fire, as, in old time, with water, and miraculously make it, thenceforth, the purified abode of righteousness and peace, under his universal reign ; that he will bring with him his people, of the past ages, raised from the dead, to preside with him, over this restored scene, for a thousand years ; we are as much bound to believe that prophetic affirmation of his kingly age, as the historic record of his first advent, and his priestly age. We have no more right to suppose, contrary to the literal Scripture, or the figurative and symbolic Scriptures, manifestly setting forth more impressively the literal facts, that the world, in general, will be developed into a perfect state, than that the antediluvian world, or any nations of past ages, – Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Babylon, Greece, Rome, Jerusalem, were so developed, which nations are now known, historically and certainly, to have been subverted and destroyed. If

Christ is known, historically, to have been manifested,—the Angel of the covenant, after the fall of man, and to have set up, supernaturally, an elect church upon the earth; if the same heavenly Messenger again appeared, to preserve, supernaturally, his elect, in the time of general destruction by the flood; and again, in proper humanity, at Jerusalem, to save the elect among the Jews from the overthrow of that apostate and doomed people; if, after his visible return to heaven, he sent forth his Spirit, with signs and wonders, and diverse miracles, to bring in the chosen remnant of the children of the covenant, and his elect among the Gentiles; and if, upon their complete ingathering, and the greater apostasy and corruption of the antichristian part of mankind, and the almost absolute extinction of the true faith, it is affirmed that he will then appear, visibly, a second time, and achieve, personally, his final triumph, during another, the judicial age, we are bound to give, equally, the history and the prophecy, our literal and unquestioning belief. There is no reason in the nature of the case, none in the laws of language, none in theology, or analogy, or history, or experience, why they should be subjected to a different interpretation. On the contrary, to set up our speculations and theories of a millennium in distinction from these logical, inductive, and historical conclusions, or in opposition to them, and to put, accordingly, an allegorical and mythical interpretation upon the holy Scriptures, as the modern churches have done, for the last hundred and fifty years, and are now doing, in accordance with the merely imaginative and fictitious philosophies of the schools, is infinitely dishonorable to the word of God, and dangerous to the souls of men. The curious, romantic, discordant, and mostly unintelligible literature, which, on this and other related subjects of the Bible, has now spread itself from the great centres of theological instruc-

tion, over the whole christian world, and has nearly superseded the primitive and reformed theology, and has controlled the social and political movements of the nations, producing the agitations, destructions and confusions which now exist, is derogatory to the honor of Jesus Christ, and is the most remarkable sign of the predicted apostasy of the last times.

Indeed it is out of all propriety, and against all our ideas of prudence, to imagine, and much more to speculate and theorize, with the ambitious and irreverent moderns, as if, after God has, in successive past ages, literally fulfilled his word, he will, henceforth, depart from his accustomed plan of government, and fulfil his word, not literally, but only in a figure ; as if, when he says he will come in the clouds of heaven, and destroy the antichristian nations, and introduce a millennial age by more remarkable signs, and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, than have attended any of his previous dispensations, we are not to understand him as having any such intentions; but only to make the existing means of grace more effectual, and, by increased advantages of learning, trade and commerce, or other appliances of an ungodly civilization, all the while becoming more ungodly, to overcome the Devil, and establish his destined glorious kingdom. It is doing violence to language, to the laws of reasoning, the teachings of analogy, the existing facts of nature, and the phenomena of society, to entertain such a supposition.

It is distinctly affirmed in Scripture, that Christ is received into heaven till ' the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets ;' that he will be sent forth again, with great power and glory, visibly to every eye, to make that prophetic restitution ; that all they who pierced him shall then look upon him, and ' all kindreds of the earth

shall wail because of him ;' that his feet shall stand, in that day, upon the mount of Olives; that he will then not find faith on the earth, his elect being but a 'little flock,' a small and despised minority; that he will proceed to vindicate their cause before the worlds; that 'he will consume the man of sin by the breath of his mouth, and destroy him by the brightness of his coming ;' that he will collect his ancient covenant people, the Jews, and bring them out of all the lands through which they had been scattered, and re-establish Divine ordinances upon his holy mountain in Jerusalem ; that he will bring with him the righteous dead, in a resurrection-state of glory, to reign with him, as kings and priests, over the residuary people of the earth, for a thousand years; that at the close of that millennial age, the rest of the dead will be raised, to receive their doom ; that the delivered, manifested, triumphant church shall be presented to the Father as the grand accomplishment of the mediatorial work, and, thenceforth, through the ages of ages, show forth the praises of redeeming love. Now, if, according to the philosophies, and the now popularized ideas, all these, and other similar remarkable statements, the theme of the prophetic Scriptures, illustrated and impressed by diverse figures and symbolic representations, – mean only that Christ will not come, personally, to introduce the millennial age, but by his Spirit; that he will come personally, if at all, only at its close, and will then find, not an unbelieving, antichristian, but a converted world ; that the fall of antichrist is not by destructions, but by regeneration; that "the first resurrection" is not a resurrection, but a revival of religion ; that the earth, during the millennial age, will not be paradisiacal, but only improved by a more scientific agriculture ; that the return of the Jews to their own land is not a literal restoration, but their ingathering into the Christian church ;

that the last resurrection, if it be anything but a figure, is not a resurrection of the rest of the dead, but of all the dead; and that the earth is not to become the inheritance, and own the sway of the symbolic New-Jerusalem, or be the residence of the residuary and converted nations, but utterly annihilated and blotted out from the planetary system; – then the language of Scripture is an unsafe vehicle of thought; the future is contradicted by all the analogies of the past; experience is an uncertain guide; and, in regard to the most important and consequential subjects of the Revelations, or, indeed, the whole of them, we are afloat on a wild ocean of hypothesis and conjecture. This the intelligent Millenarian cannot admit. He cannot, with the philosophers of history, or the speculative theologians who are captivated by the methods of these merely naturalistic expositors of the Divine government, confound the moral with the natural providence of God, the ethics of Scripture with the politics of party, the real with the nominal church, nor vital christianity with the ritual or conceptional christianity of the so called christian world, nor true virtue with the mechanisms by which the reforming and civilizing processes of society are, for the most part, carried on, and because of which it seems to a partial and superficial observation to be going on unto perfection. He reads the Bible as it is written, and not as these interested critics and expositors declare it to him. He accepts the Divine record, and not the human *rationale* of the creation, and God's end in it; of the fall and depravity of man; of the destructive tendencies of the fallen world; the actual overthrow of its successive guilty nations; and the failure of its artificial contrivances to prop up its decaying institutions, and stave off the judgments of offended heaven. He cannot doubt that God will carry on his government *as he says he will do*, according to his own perfect and

eternal counsels, and not in accommodation to the notions, schemes, or wishes of wicked men, or bewildered good men; that he will do, in all respects, and at all times, what his own declared perfections, his specific promises and threatenings require of him, though it be to the confuting of their fallacies, the confounding of their devices, the overthrow of their corrupted institutions, the disappointment of their presumptuous hopes, as he always has done, to the vindication of himself before all the worlds which he has made. He stands upon the Bible, and that alone, interpreted not by the wisdom of this world, but by itself, by the providence of God in history, and by the teachings of the promised Spirit. If this Divine and most authoritative book declares, historically or prophetically, facts and events, in plain and literal language, such as he who runs may read, he believes accordingly. If it employs difficult figures, or obscure symbols, to make these literal facts and events more conspicuous and impressive, or to put good men upon a careful and attentive study, or to assist their knowledge of his word according to the successive unfoldings of his providence, he interprets these figures and symbols, not romantically, by his own conceits, but scientifically, according to their respective laws, and believes, more profoundly, the facts and events which they are intended to establish. These facts and events, consequently, stand out before his mind as verities and certainties, substantial matters of faith, incentives to duty, and encouragements to prayer. He knows that he could not, if he would, have things otherwise than as God ordains them; and he would not, if he could. He knows, that, by the most anxious thought, or ingenious reasoning, he could not add one cubit to his stature; or, though he should swear by his head, make one hair white or black. He bows, accordingly, to the word of God. "Let God be true, but every man a liar!"

The views which I have above expressed, and placed in such different theological aspects and relations as the time permits, represent, according to my understanding, the most important peculiarities of the Millenarian belief. I will now reduce them, with more formality, but briefly, to a few theses, which I beg leave to submit to the attentive consideration of the Convention.

I. That the holy Scriptures are the word of God, plenarily inspired, and of absolute authority : – that they are, summarily, a history of a peculiar kingdom of God which he has set up in this apostate and sinful world, for his own glory in the everlasting ages : – that this history reaches from the γενεσις of the world to its παλιγγενεσια, at the second coming of Christ, and the introduction of his millennial reign over it : – that all other matters contained in Scripture are revealed and declared in reference to this peculiar kingdom, and derive their chief importance from their connexion with it ; the natural government of God, his general providence over the nations, his laws, ordinances, institutions and interpositions being described mainly as they relate to this method of manifesting his glory to created beings : – and that this kingdom of God is his church, redeemed and saved by the blood of Christ, and the power of the Holy Ghost, 'out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,' in whose redemption, deliverance, and final exaltation, to the everlasting discomfiture and overthrow of devils and wicked men, all the attributes of the Divine nature will be displayed.

II. That covenants of grace and redemption exist in all eternity between the persons of the ever blessed Trinity ; and that, in time, during the successive ages or dispensations of God, corresponding engagements and promises are ratified between God and the representative saints, particularly his servant Abraham, – the father of

the Jewish nation, and head of all believers in Christ, – which covenants and engagements do solemnly assure the existence, continuance, deliverance, and glory of this kingdom of God ; namely, – that, during the successive ages or dispensations of God, his elect, the εκκλησια, given to Christ from everlasting, as the fruit of his labor and travail, shall be personally and individually regenerated, gathered into a church-state, preserved from falling into ruinous apostasy and sin amidst the various corruptions, temptations and persecutions to which they are subjected in their militant state, till the second coming of their Lord, and the introduction of a triumphant millennial age of glory.

III. That, at the end of the present or Christian age, the islands and continents of the habitable world, having been peopled, in the wise providence of God, according to his purpose concerning the respective races, nations and families of mankind ; and their successive peoples, having had traditional or revealed knowledge of his will, in his different dispensations ; and more especially, having had the Gospel preached to them, as a witness, in the last times ; and these successive peoples, having wickedly refused obedience, rejected the Son of God, and contemned his Spirit, except the elect, who are scarcely saved from the wide-spread abominations of the earth, and a residue, certain, but indefinite, will be desolated by natural and supernatural judgments of God, for their sinful rebellion against his government, at the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven.

IV. That Christ, at his second coming, will raise from the dead all the elect of the past ages ; will take to a place of security all the elect then living ; will, 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,' transfigure them, answerably to Moses and Elias, who appeared with him, typically, in the mount of transfiguration, where Peter,

and James, and John beheld the foreshadowing of his kingly glory; and will then miraculously subvert and transform the present scene of things in general: – that the earth, thenceforward, purified by the fires of his judgments, and delivered from the curse of sin, and restored to a paradisiacal state, – new heavens and a new earth, – will enjoy its predicted millennial age, – the great theme of prophecy, – the seventh decade, the Sabbath of time; – that the tabernacle of God will then be, not as of old, with one favored people only, but with mankind in general, and he shall dwell with them, and be their God, and they shall be his people. No vail will then be spread before the Shechinah, as in the ancient temple, or as now, while Christ is within the heavenly sanctuary; but "*The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together;* FOR THE MOUTH OF THE LORD HATH SPOKEN IT."

V. That, on the restored and purified earth, a new social, civil and ecclesiastical organization shall be set up among the generations of men then ensuing, who will be all converted by the continual presence and power of the Holy Ghost, so as was unknown in the preceding ages, and will heartily submit themselves to the government of God, every knee bowing to him, and every tongue swearing allegiance to their glorious King: — that the general government will be a system of rule in which state and church shall be identical, a thing impossible, and forbidden by God to be attempted, during the preceding ages, by reason of the imperfect sanctification of the church, and the abounding wickedness of mankind in general: – that Christ, the great "Melchisedec, King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God," shall be the supreme ruler: – that with him the risen saints, made Kings and Priests, shall preside and reign over the regenerated nations: – that these glorified beings shall so

preside and reign over the restored scene, and in such relations to the successive generations and inhabitants of the re-peopled earth, – which God has otherwise not explained, – as that all these regenerated nations shall be righteous and peaceful ; all the natural governments shall be constituted, regulated, and administered after a Divine pattern ; all kings and peoples shall bring their glory and honor into the New Jerusalem, and own the sovereignty, before despised, of him who is ' the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who, in his appointed times, shall show all these things.'

VI. That Christ, in near connexion with his second coming, ordained to sit then as king upon his holy hill of Zion, will miraculously restore the people of the ancient covenant from their miraculous dispersions, and gather them out of all the gentile nations into their own land : – that he will then fulfil the promise made to Abraham, – a promise not absolutely fulfilled during the secular history of the Jews, but still reserved till the gathering together of all their scattered tribes, as well " the outcasts of Israel" as " the dispersed of Judah," – that the whole land of Canaan should be their possession ; and also the larger promise of the whole earth ; – for, from Jerusalem, as a centre, ' the word of the Lord shall go forth, and his law from Zion, and all people, nations and languages shall serve him.' " In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof ; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old : That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed ; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. *And I*

will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof ; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" !

VII. That, during the millennium, Satan, the great adversary and tempter, who, till that age of triumph, leads captive, at his will, the fallen race in general, will be confined, by the express power of God, and restrained, " that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled :"- that "after that he must be loosed a little season," and again permitted to tempt mankind, ' to gather the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth to battle ; - that God, having suffered this great and last demonstration to be made of the insufficiency of men to withstand, unaided, this powerful and malignant spirit, will then manifest, more remarkably, his own personal and holy sovereignty, and ' send fire out of heaven to devour the hostile forces that shall compass the camp of the saints, and the beloved city' : - that ' the Devil that deceived the nations shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever' : - that, in connexion with these wonderful judgments the rest of the dead will come forth to their final sentence, and death and hell be cast into the lake of fire ; - that prophetic symbol of the enduring wrath of God against all rebellion and sin : — and that, thenceforward, there shall be no end to the increase and glory of the Messianic kingdom, the ineffable manifestations of the Godhead, and the blessedness of the justified and recovered world.

VIII. That the above theses are and must be true, if the Scripture be, as it is, the word of God, and his own authoritative history of his government of the world; and if its language, direct or tropical, be properly subject, as it is, to those natural and scientific laws of interpretation by which alone we verify all our other knowledge; or if its symbols are to be understood, as they are, on the whole, to be understood, by the laws which God himself observes in his own revealed interpretation of such as he has interpreted in Scripture, which form a very considerable part of them. That the facts and events concerning the kingdom of God, as above drawn out, are described, from the beginning to the end of Scripture, in various relations and many distinct forms of plain and literal speech, without a figure, as facts and events, and nothing else, in distinction from all signs, tokens, myths, and equally from all other and different facts and events; and these several facts and events God calls upon all men to observe as actual and historical exponents of his counsels and purposes in moral government; that these historical descriptions are, in all respects and to all intents, as direct and literal as the proclamations of a chief magistrate, or the enactments of a legislature, or the decrees of a judiciary, or the recitals of secular history, or familiar conversational discourse, or, indeed, as is possible to the parts of speech, and are equally not to be interpreted in any speculative, or spiritual, or allegorical double sense, but strictly as they are written. That these same facts and events are also otherwise described, historically, and to the same single intent, in many varieties of figurative illustration, adapted to awaken and impress readers of all times, countries, temperaments, degrees of knowledge, and diversities of condition, which various and glowing figures to an attentive and serious mind do inconceivably heighten the effect of the direct

and literal descriptions, and still more exalt the government of God. That the same facts and events are furthermore presented in diverse more obscure and difficult, but pregnant and impressive symbols, peculiar to the prophetic Scripture, and setting forth these literal facts and events by remarkable analogies drawn from all the realms of nature, from rude matter, from moulded forms and subtle essences, from the mineral, vegetable and animal worlds, from the caverns of the earth, the abysses of the sea, the circles of the heavens, and the useful or destructive activities of their respective hosts; from the phenomena of mind, from cultivated and savage life, and the characteristics of regenerate and unregenerate men; and that these symbols are designed to awaken, and convince, and warn the thoughtless, unbelieving world, if it will but lend its ear and its heart to the word of God, and to assure the attentive and anxious people of God who inquire diligently at the oracles, that, according to such similitudes and analogies which they cannot but see and comprehend in material and mental natures, so God will fulfil his literal word, and execute his laws, and carry out his system of government to its appointed ends. That, to interpret these literal facts and events so remarkably set forth in Scripture, as if they were not real, but mere conceptional images, or representations of events in an imaginary spiritual world, or as if they were intended to denote facts and events of a wholly different character, having no natural likeness but a notional correspondence to these literal facts themselves; or that to interpret these figures and symbols by which God more forcibly impresses the literal facts of his government, as if such were not their design, or as if their design were merely to dramatise such philosophicical ideas, or such imaginary and supposititious facts; or as if their relations to any existing or ordained facts and events in our own actual

world, were wholly incomprehensible, neither fit materials of faith, or subjects of study, or incentives to duty, or warnings against rebellion and sin, or encouragements to prayer; or not to be understood, if prophetical, till after their occurrence, when it would be too late to understand them for any practical effect,– is altogether gratuitous and unreasonable, dishonorable to God, and destructive to the souls of men : — just as any such interpretation of any other book, or statutes, or proclamations, or decrees, or testimony, or discourse, would tend to the confusion of all natural knowledge, the subversion of all government and law, the disorganization of society, and the destruction of the world.

IX. That, more particularly in relation to the churches and ministers of Christ, those rationalistic and spiritualizing principles and methods of interpretation which would practically nullify the doctrine of the Millenarians, though they could not affect its Scriptural reality, would, if consistently carried out, and applied to other doctrines of the Bible, as professed by orthodox Christians in general, and embodied in their standards and formulas of faith from the beginning, in like manner, nullify these received doctrines, reduce the whole of Scripture to a myth ; the churches and their subsidiary institutions to mere academies and schools of philosophy ; the preachers to masters of dialectics, disputers of science, visionary reformers, theatrical declaimers, or political agitators ; and the people in general to ignorance, indifference, frivolity, infidelity, licentiousness and anarchy. That this tendency is already remarkable, to a considerable extent, throughout the Christian world, in connexion with such rationalistic and spiritualizing principles and methods :– that, without a revival of the millenarian faith, and of the primitive doctrines in general, by a return to the simple verities of Scripture, this tendency will become effect

more extensively, and consummate the predicted apostasy of the last days; — and that such results are inevitable, because the governing principles of interpretation of any age, or people, or any institution of learning or religion, must, by a natural law, at length govern their methods of ethical and theological reasoning, and the creeds and articles of belief in which their ethics and theology are embodied, and, consequently, their whole practical life; — of which all the countries of the eastern world, the seats of primitive Christianity, where the battle of judgment will soon be raging; and, in modern times, Germany, France, Switzerland, — the lands of Luther, Calvin and Zwingle, — and other States, the birth-places of the Protestant reformation, — have become unquestionable historical proofs. And, lastly, that the most appalling evidence of this growing tendency and effect is the prevailing apathy and unconcern of the churches and ministers of Christ, in respect to his second coming and personal reign upon the earth; and the cold reserve, or feverish jealousy, or sneering contemptuousness, or proud disdain, or peevish fretfulness, or sideway thrusts, or flat hostility of most or many persons, both within and without the visible church of Christ, and on the part of the secular and religious press in general, to which those honest and faithful men are now subjected who testify, in their sincerity, to this and other related facts and verities of the word of God.

From the above statement, which I have laid before the Convention in as general and condensed a form as possible, and in as many different points of light as the occasion permits, it will be observed, that Millenarians, according to a strictly legitimate and scientific method of inquiry, reduce their particular doctrine, and all the related doctrines, facts, events, precepts, promises, prophecies, and institutions of holy Scripture, to a common

denominator ; namely, *history*, – the history of God's government over the world, in reference to his kingdom of grace and glory by Jesus Christ.* But it is a history of the providence of a personal God, actually living, reigning and governing, and working all things according to the counsel of his own will ; and it is also inspir-

* The reader will better appreciate this method by referring to the use made of it, for a different, though related purpose, by Bishop Butler, in his "Analogy." That remarkable work is constructed, throughout, on the principles of the Millenarians ; and these principles accordingly shine out in many passages of his argument both for "Natural and Revealed Religion," which consists with them, and by them, and for them ; and which, evidently, in his judgment, is not complete, and could not be adequately understood without them. It was, by no means, Butler's design to discuss the Millenarian doctrine. But he comprehended and accepted it. It was before his mind in all his writing, and is a golden thread running through it. I know no work that constitutes a better basis, or suggests a better method of inquiry on the subject. Certainly no writer so ably confutes those speculative and hypothetical methods through which, for more than a century and a half, society has been insensibly led away from a due consideration of the realities of the Divine government. I say, insensibly ; for most persons who are captivated by what they esteem *new lights* of philosophy, seem not to be aware that they have substituted shadows for substances, and semblances for facts. There is not a more singular anomaly than that "Butler's Analogy" should be retained as a classic in all our respectable schools of learning, and held to be of paramount authority, the ablest of its kind, and yet practically ignored in the interpretation of the very book whose credibility it so perfectly establishes. But such is the infatuation of our illuminated and progressive age ! We admit the Scripture ; we defend the Scripture ; we endorse the claims of Scripture ; we patronize its institutions, and make our boast of them as the pride and glory of the age ;— and yet, as if, on that very account, justify ourselves in following such fancies, and taking such liberties as we please, in expounding the authoritative records of this word of God. But we are not alone. The Jews did just the same things before us, and hastened their catastrophe, as we do ours, in 'making the word of God of no effect through their traditions.' It did not save them that they had Abraham to their father ; and it will not save us. No man is any better, and no nation is any better merely for a Christian name. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." Abraham 'accounted that God was able to raise up Isaac, even from the dead.' "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He accepted, by faith, the prophetic evidence of the Messianic reign, – the reign of grace ! the reign of glory ! So do not many, who call themselves after his name.

ed history ; and, therefore, not fabulous. The Bible, entirely, is a book of realities ; and though it contains principles, laws, parables, dramatic scenes and descriptions, and allegorical representations, these all have reference to literal facts and events, and to actual agents, moral beings, and are intended to represent God's methods of carrying on his administration of affairs, with reference to an actual retribution, and the glorifying of himself as a righteous and merciful governor of the world. God teaches nothing in his word that does not represent facts as taking place from the beginning to the end of the economy herein revealed and declared to mankind. All is real. Whatever has come to pass has come to pass actually as he said it ; and whatever he says will come to pass, will, in like manner be actually and literally fulfilled. Concerning his great and glorious kingdom he leaves nothing to the judgments, opinions, or fancies of men ; but requires them to believe what he has written, and to behave accordingly. Else the Scripture is an uncertain guide, an instrument which any individual, or school, or party may convert to their respective short-sighted, or selfish ends, to the greater confusion and irregularity of this fallen world. What has been is our natural help to the understanding of what will be ; for God's system of government is one and uniform, and analogy, according to the Divine word and providence, is the guide of life. If we leave this method of reasoning and interpretation for speculation and hypothesis ; if, instead of inquiring how God has governed the world, in order to understand what he says of his future government of it, we resort to mere conjecture, however subtle and ingenious ; if, instead of interpreting the prophetic by the historic Scriptures, and resolving them into a common narrative of God's actual dealings with mankind, we inquire how God may be supposed to govern ; or how, in

our poor judgment, he would best govern; or what way of government would be most agreeable to the views of this or that party or school of theology or philosophy; or most in accordance with the learned critics and commentators who have exercised their ingenuity upon the subject; or most likely to subserve the supposed interests of particular learned bodies, or benevolent societies, or political projectors, or social reformers, or excited philanthropists, or of secular civilization in general, the consequence must be an utter bewilderment and confusion of society, to the practical defeating of all the beneficent ends of the Revelations. Such bewilderment and confusion, I am compelled to believe, have already taken place, to a great extent, in the professedly Christian world; so that no subjects of human inquiry are now so much embarrassed, perplexed, uncertain, and distasteful to the generality, or so harassing and distressing to serious but untaught and undisciplined minds, as the subjects of the prophetic Scriptures. The faithful study of these highly important portions of the word of God, in opposition to the precepts of Christ, and in relinquishment of the blessing promised to such faithful study, is almost universally abandoned; and studies merely literary, critical, philosophical, speculative, which turn away the minds of men from the things that are to come, have usurped its place. The appalling, practical consequence has already, to a great extent, ensued, that Christian men, and ministers of the Gospel, instead of testifying the things of the kingdom of God to their dying fellow men, or doing what they ought to do, and could do, in causing the Gospel of the kingdom to be preached in all the world *for a witness* unto all nations, for the speedy ingathering of God's elect, are leaving this their specific and appropriate work, and are wasting much of their energies in merely secular pursuits, or upon delusive

schemes of educating, reforming, and re-organizing society with a view to its supposed developement into a perfect state ; — a result impossible but by the conversion of individual persons to Christ, *through the Gospel* ; — a result, moreover, not contemplated by God during this age of discrimination and election, but only in that higher age, when he shall make all things new, 'and gather together all things in Christ.'

It is also to be observed, that Millenarianism, having this simple, distinct, historical character, in opposition to all theory and speculation, and to the corresponding affected criticism of committed expositors, and the short-sighted schemes of heated and visionary reformers, being a succinct account, according to the Scripture, of God's actual way of governing this lost world, for his own glory in the ages to come, an account not merely of his natural working by general laws, but also, and more especially, of his supernatural and miraculous interpositions ; therefore it has nothing to do with the endless questionings, enigmas and puzzles by which the curious and speculative, or the querulous and captious seek to embarrass it, and render it odious to the thoughtless, superficial and irreligious classes of society. Thus :- it concerns not Millenarians to show when, or how, or in what circumstances or conditions conformable to our natural and imperfect ideas of things, the Lord Jesus Christ will appear, the second time ; or raise the dead bodies of his saints ; or secure the living against the catastrophe which will then take place ; nor how that catastrophe itself will be produced ; nor with what precise changes of the physical system of the world ; nor what will be the specific organization or administration of the new and more glorious economy that will then be set up ; nor how Christ will make himself personally visible and active in the restored world ; nor whether he will be visible to all parts

of it at the same time; nor in what manner his risen saints — the symbolic 'New Jerusalem that cometh down from God out of heaven' — will be constituted in their resurrection-state and carry on their reign as kings and priests upon the earth; nor what precise relations they will bear to the successive generations that shall be born into the renovated world; nor whether these successive generations of this paradisiacal state shall pass by death or transfiguration into the society of the New Jerusalem, to extend the sphere and accumulate the blessedness of its glorious reign. These, and numberless other questions, of a like character, as they belong to the preternatural counsels and working of God, utterly beyond our faculties, and wholly unexplained as yet in any of the revelations he has thus far dispensed, concern us not at all in our present probationary state. God has judged such knowledge inappropriate to this our infant and disciplinary sphere, and it is both foolish and presumptuous to seek for it before the time.

But these great matters, however difficult and incomprehensible, have no more force as objections against the prophetic facts of the second advent of Christ, the resurrection of the righteous dead, the millennial age of glory, or other events relating to the predicted metamorphosis of our present scene of things, than similar questions would have had, *a priori*, or than they now have, on merely speculative grounds, against this present scene itself. On such grounds one might as reasonably question the original creation, or the Revelations of God, or any of the miracles of past ages, or the Trinity, the incarnation, the atonement, or, indeed, the advent and the resurrection, at any other time, or in any other conditions, than those set forth by the millenarian faith. A drop of prophetic or historic reality, on this or any other subject of religion is of higher consideration than an ocean of *a*

priori, or conjectural improbabilities. One may ask "How can these things be?" with no more propriety than Nicodemus could ask concerning the regeneration, or than Paul's objector could inquire, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" The same rationalistic inquisitiveness and querulousness which were reproved in those well known cases, would be equally reprovable in regard to the predicted facts of the millennium. If Millenarians should undertake to answer such childish inquiries, or think themselves called upon to explain, beforehand, or at all, the prophetic facts which they accept, on the authority of God, as some inconsiderately have done, they would be soon hopelessly lost in the wilderness, or dash their foot in leaping from a pinnacle of the temple. They might be tempted to hide their shame in a shameless desertion of the faith which they so inadequately understood, or so unwisely defended. It would be with them as with their orthodox anti-millenarian brethren who should affect to explain how "In the beginning the Word was with God and was God;" or how "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" or, as it is likely to be, sooner than they apprehend, with the men of merely speculative, natural science, who would solve, on their naturalistic principles, the problems of cosmogony, or the deluge, or ethnology, or trace in general the footprints of the Creator. From all these curious researches beyond the limits of our faculties and the guidance of Revelation, and in whatever department of knowledge, but most certainly in the supernatural knowledge of Scripture which is revealed only to faith, if we turn back at all, and are not rather left to bewilder ourselves in the mazes of unbelief, it is only to be more deeply convinced of our ineffable littleness, ignorance and imbecility. "It is high

as heaven, what canst thou do? it is deeper than hell, what canst thou know? the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

Furthermore, it is evident, that Millenarianism, resolvable, as it clearly is, into a series of prophetico-historical data, according to the method of interpretation which we call literal, in distinction from that mythical and allegorical method by which, when the Scripture says one thing, it is so explained as to mean another and a different thing, must be true, as any other matters of fact which God literally declares in his word: and they all stand or fall together: – or, if supposed not true, it can be proved false only by supposition, which is no satisfactory proof at all. That is, it can only be proved to be inconsistent with certain theories of spiritualizing and rationalistic interpreters, who substitute an allegorical and mythical for the natural meaning of the language of the Bible. It can never be proved that when the Bible, in simple and natural language, asserts certain things to be facts, they are not facts as asserted, but only figures or myths that represent merely ideas, or facts of a wholly different or opposite nature. It can be argued against the Millenarians, not that the facts which they allege as the basis of their belief, are not described in the word of God, nor that their interpretation of these facts is ungrammatical, or illogical, or absurd, or inconsistent with the experience and history of past ages, or unsupported by analogy, or contrary to the present aspects and indications of the Divine providence; for they clearly are not so; and it is their great merit that they stand on these legitimate inductive bases. It can be argued only that a figurative or spiritual interpretation is more reasonable and agreeable, more consistent with the judgment of some popular commentators, or more hopeful and

encouraging to a benevolent mind, or more promotive of effort for the conversion of the world, or less likely, according to the judgment of many respectable people, to sensualize our conceptions of a future state, or to awaken enthusiasm, or, in some other imaginable ways, to prove a hindrance to the cause of God. But, obviously, all that way of arguing is shortsighted and fallacious: for we have not faculties to judge what is most reasonable, and fit, and congruous, and hopeful, in respect to a kingdom of God that reaches from everlasting to everlasting; — and learned critics and commentators, when they reason in that speculative way, upon subjects of such infinite scope and comprehension, are more likely to mistake than even children and babes, as Christ himself assures us; — and what seems to us, in our ignorance, likely to be discouraging, or tending to enthusiam, or otherwise fraught with evils, may seem so only from our entire ignorance or partial knowledge of the subject, or because of a wrong stand-point of observation; — and, moreover, what might be really attended with some acknowledged difficulties and inconveniences, by reason of the confused and sinful state of society in general, or the imprudencies and waywardness of individual minds, might yet turn out, in the issue, to the highest advancement of truth and goodness. And, on the whole, it should be farther observed, that when God avers distinctly and literally that he will do such and such things, in furtherance of his comprehensive plan of government, and when he confirms and impresses these distinct and literal statements by various figures and symbols eminently fitted to produce this effect; and when these literal averments made more significant and weighty by such figurative and symbolic representations, are clearly analogous to all the past history of his moral providence; and when all the present aspects

of the world are remarkably consistent with them, and can hardly be said to have any intelligible moral meaning without them; and when, moreover, the church of God, in its best periods, has so received them;* it is far more legitimate and safe to confide simply in such accumulated proof than to our mere ideas and notions concerning what it would be most reasonable, or honorable, or useful, or hopeful for God to do, in his government of the world. Nothing can be more lawful or prudent than to reason from what has been to what will be; and when we leave that authorized method of learning for speculation and hypothesis, we soon lose our reckoning, and find, perhaps too late, that we have made a hopeless shipwreck of our faith. From that great danger, so imminent to the schools and churches in general, at the present time, may God, in his great mercy, deliver them.

The Convention will perceive that I have adhered to the design of this essay; – not to sustain or defend, direct-

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* Coleridge, whose authority, however otherwise questionable, will be respected in a matter of literary history, says;– "If the first three Gospels, joined with the unbroken faith and tradition of the first three centuries, can decide the question, the Millenarians have the best of the argument."

He refers to Austin and Jerome, the first of extant writers who controverted the Millenarian faith; and affirms their objections, and those of succeeding writers, in respect to its supposed Judaizing tendencies, to be wholly imaginary, according to the testimony of the most respectable Jewish Rabbis themselves: and he adds;– "I more than suspect that Austin's and Jerome's strongest ground for rejecting the second coming of the Lord, in his kingly character, was, that they were tired of waiting for it."

Literary Remains.

But the learned Chillingworth is more to the purpose, who founds one of his leading arguments against the professed infallibility of Rome, upon the fact which he pronounces unquestionable, that the primitive church was millenarian, in opposition to the modern doctrine of the pretended successors of St. Peter.

These references, which might be indefinitely multiplied, are not indeed necessary to a student of history whose memory is faithful. But many, in our times, seem to have forgotten that Millenarianism is not a theory, and not modern, but a faith, having at least the merit of apostolical antiquity.

ly, but to *state* the doctrine of the Millenarians. I have gone into no critical discussion of isolated passages of Scripture, or analysis of specific prophecies, or chronological inquiry, or elucidation of expressed signs and portents, or other related topics, however important or conclusive in a comprehensive argument ; in respect to all which, an expert critic, or a cunning interpreter, of a different faith, and even a mere sciolist, or a lively child could create a thousand difficulties where none really exist ; or just as easily remove as many and greater difficulties which are insurmountable. I have not thought it necessary or expedient, even if it were possible on this occasion, to pursue such themes, or expose such craft, or in any way to embarrass the simple question at issue ; but to set in order facts as they lie on the face of Scripture, the natural exponents of its deep and central truths, and the proper incentive and guide to such more extended inquiry. To some, doubtless, the simple statement of this or any other doctrine of religion, is its best defence, because best adapted to an honest faith ; and I will hope, that what has now been spoken will be accepted by such persons because of its simplicity, and because of its concurrence with the drift of Scripture. If, however, others, or the most, should still prefer a different method, a Millenarian, on a more fit occasion, would not shun, but follow it. For, to his mind, all other sources of evidence and knowledge, on this subject, pour themselves into the stream of historical theology ever flowing, through the pages of the Bible, into that ocean of millennial glory which its closing Revelations open to the wondering vision of the church. He refuses nothing but romance ; nothing but the conjectures of curious men, the views of committed partizans, the dogmas of prejudiced and servile imitators, the unmeaning verbiage of